

ACC TODAY

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Summer 2012



Changes at the top 2012

New commanders take the reins at ACC, ECC, and the MICC **4**

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View from the Top
Communities of Practice
ACC Awards



CG's Note

Proud to Serve

*By Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols
Commanding General
U.S. Army Contracting Command*

To the men and women of ACC:

It is a great honor and privilege to serve with you again. It doesn't seem that long ago when I assumed command of the Expeditionary Contracting Command at Fort Belvoir. I am well aware of the great gift that has been given me – to be ACC's first commanding general.

ACC has done some amazing things since we were established in 2008. I want to keep us on this path of success while strengthening our team, maturing our capabilities and expanding our footprint. This will help us provide responsive and efficient procurement operations that enhance the Army's global war fighting dominance.

As your new CG, I believe my principal responsibilities are to serve as your enabler, advocate and champion. I pledge to provide you with the tools and resources you need to succeed. I will work hard to build and maintain public, congressional, industry and Department of Defense support for our mission, operations and people. And, I will do all that I can to encourage, mentor, recognize and reward you.

I owe you a quality working, living and playing environment where you are empowered to do your job and to provide you top cover to help enable that. I also owe you consistency and direction when leading.

What I expect in return is for you to maintain good order and discipline and tolerance for others. I also expect you to continue to perform as the consummate professionals that you are. Be candid, clear and concise when we talk. As they say, bad news doesn't get better with age. Bring me the bad news with options on how to fix it or mitigate the effects.

My last two jobs directly and daily contributed to the life and mission support for our forces in combat. As the commanding general of the U.S. Central Command Contracting Command, we worked on contracts to bring goods and services to ease the burden of living in the combat zone and to support counterinsurgency operations. Most recently as the Army's Program Executive Officer (PEO) Soldier, I directed the procurement and fielding of Soldier equipment to enhance our warrior's lethality and protection.

These missions brought home to me the incredible impact our Army Acquisition Corps has on the war and how much our Soldiers are counting on us to get our processes even more agile and responsive. And our Army is counting on us getting more efficient with each dollar we put on contract.

I am excited to be able to continue to directly affect the combat mission and our quest to keep America's Army the best equipped, best armed, best protected and most dominate decisive combat force in the world.

In the weeks and months ahead, I plan to visit as many of our units, centers and offices as I can. I'm eager to learn more about what you do and how I can help. No other command touches all aspects of a Soldier, and his or her family's needs, whether at home station or deployed. You can take great pride in knowing that you make a difference for our Army and our nation each and every day.

Thank you for your service, dedication and support.

See you in the field. ♦

ACC TODAY



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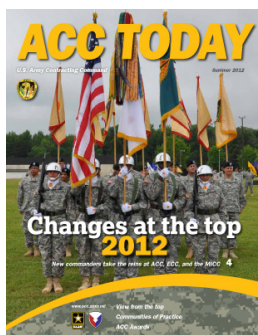
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Cover—The ACC Color Guard stand at the ready during the Expeditionary Contracting Command change of command ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



CABVI Signing – Terry McBee, Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground contracting officer (center), signs an AbilityOne contract with the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired during a kick-off ceremony held recently in upstate New York. Also pictured (left to right) is Utica, N.Y. Mayor Robert Palmieri, NY's 24th District congressional representative Richard Hanna and Rudy D'Amico, president and CEO of CABVI. (U.S. Army photo)

ACC-APG assists AbilityOne

*By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.*

Representatives from the Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., took part in a kick-off ceremony in upstate New York for an AbilityOne contract.

The contract established the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired as a prime foreign military sales vendor with the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command.

The AbilityOne Program represents nonprofit agencies that assist people who are blind or severely disabled by giving them the opportunity to acquire job skills, receive wages and gain greater independence.

“Contracts under the AbilityOne program provide government customers with quality products at reasonable rates and also offers meaningful employment to individuals with disabilities,” said Terry McBee, contracting officer and FMS team lead with Aberdeen Division D.

The \$6.5 million contract was an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity type which will provide troop support equipment and clothing items to FMS customers.

McBee and Shelby Saum, a contractor supporting ACC-APG, traveled to Utica, N.Y., for the contract

signing ceremony. Also in attendance were congressional representative Richard Hanna, 24th District, N.Y., members of the chamber of commerce and the mayor.

“It was a very humbling experience and I felt a sense of pride that I contributed in this contract that will benefit the employees of CABVI,” McBee commented.

With the signing of the contract, CABVI became an FMS vendor to supply products on an as-needed basis through the FMS process.

“The FMS process allows foreign governments to coordinate the purchase of items through USASAC,” said McBee. “As our customer, USASAC will request the purchase through ACC-APG and we will coordinate the purchase. Having this contract in place is really a time-saving measure.” Rudy D’Amico, president and chief executive officer of CABVI, said the unemployment rate for the blind or visually impaired is 70 percent nationwide.

“This contract helps CABVI continue its mission to help people who are blind or visually impaired find meaningful employment with com-

petitive pay and benefits,” he said.

After the ceremony, both McBee and Saum toured the factory to see CABVI employees sewing pajamas for the Department of Veterans Affairs. According to McBee the employees expressed appreciation for a job in which they could contribute their skills and gain a degree of independence.

“It was really a great experience to see these visually impaired employees performing their duties with great confidence,” Saum added.

Employment is the key to economic security and personal independence of all Americans, especially Americans with disabilities, added Tina Ballard, executive director of the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled. This committee is an independent federal agency that administers the AbilityOne Program.

“Through employment, this group of Americans will not only enhance their sense of well-being and gain more confidence, but will also be able to enjoy a reduced dependence on government support and join the ranks of taxpayers,” Ballard said. ♦



Patricia J. Fox, Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, recently briefed a representative from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. (U.S. Army photo)

Fox remains cool under pressure

of high level, short notice presentation

*By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.*

RESearch TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. —When the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy needed information on innovative approaches for funding research partnerships it turned to Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. ACC-APG turned to Patricia J. Fox.

Fox, chief, ACC-APG, Research Triangle Park Division, was asked to give a presentation to Thomas Kalil, deputy director for policy for the

White House OSTP and the senior advisor for science, technology and innovation for the National Economic Council. The presentation entitled “Business Mechanisms and Creative Research Partnerships” described the portfolio of business mechanisms used by ACC-APG on behalf of the Army Research Laboratory to meet its mission needs.

“It was an honor to be recognized as an expert in creative business mechanisms and to brief Mr. Kalil,” Fox said. “His interest in fostering innovation in how the government does business was refreshing and encouraging.”

The presentation was part of an ARL colloquium held recently at the Adelphi Laboratory Center, Adelphi, Md., where Kalil was the guest speaker. Kalil’s topic as speaker was “Enabling Science, Technology and Innovation for National Security.” The colloquium was attended by ARL staff both on-site and remote locations via video streaming. Kalil spoke about President Obama’s innovation strategy and OSTP’s role in establishing science and technology policy for the president.

Kalil toured the ARL laboratories, requested input for initiatives that he could champion in OSTP and identified time for the presentation from Fox.

Fox discussed ARL’s use of cooperative agreements and its unique provisions that enable highly effective collaboration between the government and the academic and industrial communities. In addition, she gave an overview of procurement contracting, assistance transactions and other transaction agreements for prototypes.

“I responded to questions focusing on other transaction agreements and I identified possible barriers that may inhibit commercial entities from doing business with the government,” said Fox. She concluded the presentation with a discussion on possible ways to overcome these barriers. ♦



More traveling in store for Moore

By Liz Adrian

Army Contracting Command-Rock Island Public Affairs, Rock Island, Ill.

Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.—Many people shy away from two-and-a-half month deployments to Kuwait and Qatar but for Gregory Moore it's another opportunity to learn more about the region and share his knowledge with the locals.

Moore, chief of the Kuwait/Qatar branch, Reachback Division at Army Contracting Command-Rock Island, is no stranger to Middle East travel, making the voyage at least 20 times since 2008.

"We have to continually go over and make ourselves visible to the customer and make them aware of the capabilities of the center," said Moore. "We need to let them know that we are here to provide them with the best contracting and busi-

ness advice that the Army has. My family is grown and is accustomed to me traveling so I've been kind of a go-to guy for Middle East travel."

The bulk of his recent trip was in Saudi Arabia, where he served as interim director of contracting for the Office of the Program Manager – Saudi Arabia National Guard modernization program. OPM SANG's mission focuses primarily on foreign military sales to the Saudi Arabia National Guard.

According to Michael Hutchison, ACC-RI executive director, Moore is the perfect person for face-to-face work with overseas customers.

"Pair his extensive contracting knowledge with his eager and willing attitude, along with his zeal for

successfully working the mission, and ACC-RI truly has a consummate theater contracting expert," he said.

As director of contracting for OPM SANG, he worked on contracting that dealt with light armored vehicles, tactical vehicles, and training of the Saudi National Guard.

"OPM SANG is getting ready to do a huge FMS case for the aviation upgrade modernization of the Saudi Arabia National Guard, so I had to deal with some construction projects, bunkers, and other brick-and-mortar construction," said Moore.

Construction contracting took Moore back to his roots. Earlier in his career, he worked as the construction contracting officer at Rock Island for several years, and then

Gregory Moore, ACC-RI
Kuwait/Qatar branch
chief, discusses
reachback mission
with contract specialist
Michelle Talbot. (U.S.
Army photo by Liz Adrian)

“When I go overseas I take the whole center with me. Some of them are retired, some aren’t even alive anymore, but the entire center, past and present, goes with me when I go to do these things.”

worked on contracts for chemical demilitarization facilities.

“I’m one of the only people still here that did and understands brick-and-mortar construction from a contracting officer perspective,” said Moore. “I didn’t know that I would be able to use that skill again, but when I went over there and looked at this massive amount of construction going on everywhere, I was kind of at home and I was able to impact or make a difference right away over there because I understood construction.”

That knowledge and the relationships Moore has built in the Middle East has enabled him to be more than just another business associate.

“They really wanted to know more about me as an individual,” Moore said about the locals. “I told them about my family and my beliefs and they embraced and welcomed me with hospitality. They don’t do that with everyone, so it truly was an honor.”

His dedication to the OPM SANG and reachback missions has not gone unnoticed. He recently received two awards, a coin and salutation from Brig. Gen. Victor Petrenko, program manager, OPM SANG, and the Superior Civilian Service Award for his reachback work



Visiting a local vendor, Gregory Moore tries on a traditional Arab headdress. When travelling abroad, Moore tries to connect with the local culture and engage with people. (U.S. Army photo)

from Carol Lowman, ACC’s former executive director.

Moore says the awards are a result of all of the discussions and work he and his fellow ACC-RI employees have accomplished over the years.

“When I go overseas I take the whole center with me,” he said in reference to those he has learned from during his time at Rock Island. “Some of them are retired, some aren’t even alive anymore, but the entire center,

past and present, goes with me when I go to do these things.”

Moore admits that constantly traveling is not always easy, but he’s always willing to go.

“I have to deal with a lot of difficult situations and make hard decisions,” said Moore. “For instance, the closeout meeting on the last trip was difficult and adversarial, but my leadership had the confidence in me that I could go and represent the center.” ♦

Mapping out careers

By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—The Army Contracting Command’s Civilian Workforce Workgroup has established a comprehensive career roadmap for contracting professionals to help individuals achieve their career goals.

Formed in January, the group has members from each of ACC’s organizational elements.

“The Army Contracting Command is committed to developing a professional workforce that can provide quality contracting solutions in support of our war fighters,” said Carol Lowman, deputy to the ACC commanding general. “Our continued success is dependent on



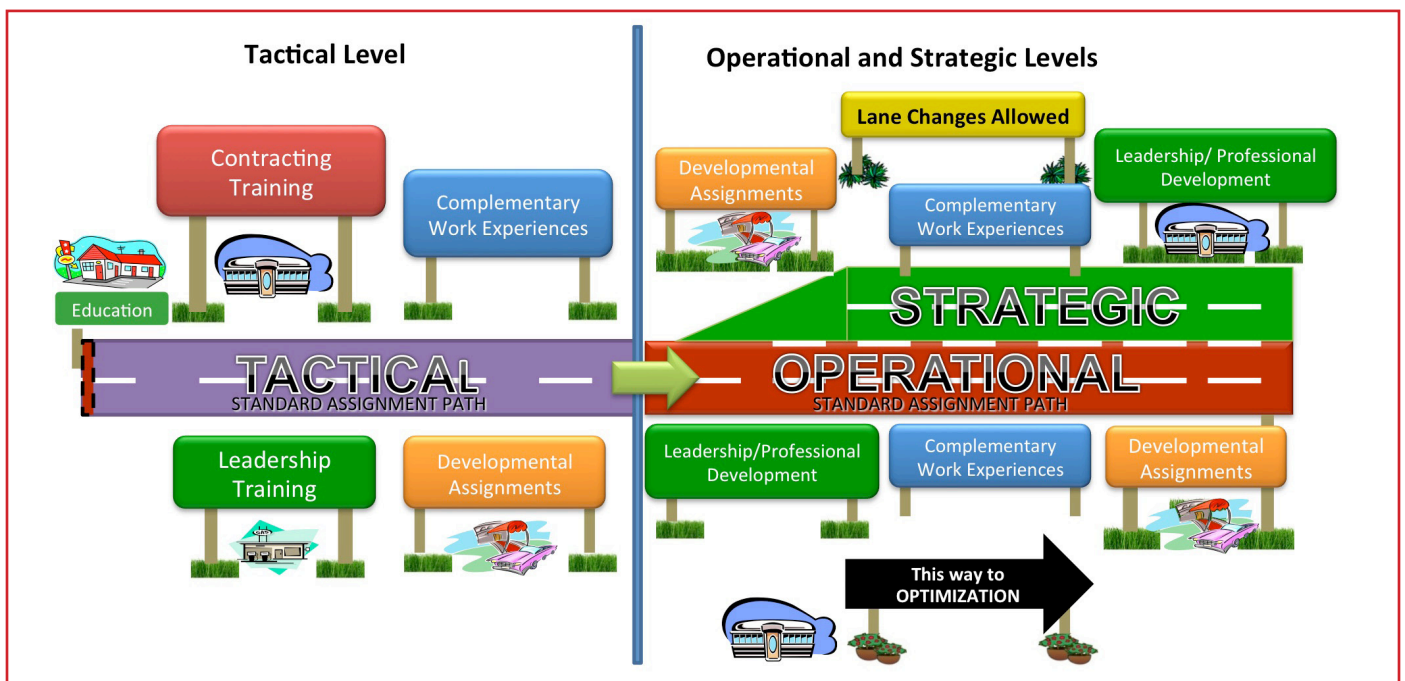
Roxanne Barbaris, Civilian Workforce Working Group co-lead and workforce development specialist, kicks off the first meeting of the Army Contracting Command’s Civilian Workforce Workgroup. The map below is divided into three key phases of contracting career progression: tactical, operational and strategic. (U.S. Army photo by Betsy Kozak)

our ability to ensure our contracting personnel receive continuous professional development throughout their careers. In doing so, we must ensure a proper balance between learning, development and on-the-job experience.”

The CWWG focused on five key objectives to develop the plan known as civilian contracting career program optimization. These objectives include contracting competencies and mission requirements; enterprise resources and tools; mentors and peer group; formal training; and, training with industry.

“The roadmap will serve as the framework to ultimately align individual career objectives with organizational performance management requirements,” said Bryon J. Young, executive director for Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground and CWWG chairman. “We must embrace an experience-based environment throughout ACC and promote an emphasis on contracting competencies. Throughout the ACC enterprise, there are opportunities for employees to gain experience in virtually every aspect of government contracting.”

The group was tasked to present its recommendations to the ACC



leadership in April, which included written guidelines for a career roadmap and a plan outline for an ACC training with industry program.

“The CWWG submitted all final products and materials to the ACC G1 (Human Resources) for final review,” said Valerie Ward, CWWG co-lead and human resource management specialist. “The products will also have a legal review before being finalized and published for the workforce. The goal is to have the roadmap in place by fiscal year 2013.”

According to the CWWG team, the roadmap was designed to assist the contracting workforce with identifying career elements in areas such as technical skills and functional competencies, general business skills, career progression, leadership skills and professional development. The map is divided into three key career phases of contracting career progression and development: tactical, operational and strategic. Within each phase there are career element guidelines to assist the contracting workforce with career decisions and to serve as a template for career progression.

CWWG members said the first step on the roadmap is the tactical phase which focuses on building a strong foundation of technical knowledge to develop the skills for increased levels of job performance and contracting certification. The tactical phase is when acquisition training is completed. To reinforce training, the CWWG recommended that training correspond to on-the-job experiences. The CWWG also suggests that entry-level careerists be given more time to achieve Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification. This would allow more time to integrate on-the-job experiences with training. Although every employee progresses at a different rate, the tactical phase ranges from four to seven years.

The CWWG also recommended that tactical-level careerists and supervisors use an automated on-the-

job training tool to validate competencies and work experience. This automated tool would pull data from the other training systems to track the progress of contracting careerists. Other recommendations include developing a partnership with the Defense Acquisition University to integrate the skills of civilian contracting personnel, 1102 career series, with their military counterparts to create unified contracting standards.

“This roadmap provides a holistic approach to managing careers and allows leaders to mentor, counsel and plan for the development of their subordinates.”

The second stage is the operational phase which focuses on gaining experience and learning skills of increased complexity. Careerists in this phase have mastered many of the skills introduced in the tactical phase. The years of experience could range from four to 20 or more years and some employees may work in this phase throughout the length of their careers. During this phase, leadership and contracting skills are honed and careerists are considered experts within the field, according to CWWG team members.

“During the operational phase, employees are proficient enough to mentor junior members and some careerists will serve in supervisory roles,” said Roxanne Barbaris, CWWG co-lead and workforce development specialist. “The contracting career series is very broad and no one will know everything within the career field, but by varying their experiences they can gain breadth and depth to their knowledge base.”

Pursuit of developmental assignment rotations and career broadening opportunities are suited best

for careerists within the operational phase, Barbaris said. Contracting leaders are expected to understand the total Army enterprise and the acquisition environment and this can be achieved through diverse assignments at different levels of the hierarchy. Contracting professionals can gain exposure to a wide variety of Army acquisition experience within ACC’s diverse commands and centers, each with varied customer

bases. These internal developmental assignments are beneficial to the contracting workforce by providing on-the-job experiences. In addition, the group researched external developmental opportunities for contracting careerists, providing the initial framework for an ACC training with industry program.

“To establish our TWI plan, the CWWG reached out to other organizations and individuals with TWI experience to gain from their expertise,” said Charles Farrior, CWWG member. The objective of the proposed TWI program is to improve the technical and professional competencies of participating employees by partnering with industry. Throughout this partnership, employees will address specific learning objectives identified prior to the assignment and will examine the best practices of industry to gain insight into industry policy and processes.

The final phase of the career roadmap is the strategic phase. Employees in this phase are typically senior leaders of Army contracting

(Continued on page 11)



Twice the contracting officials

By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—The idea of doubling an investment sounds very appealing and four contracting specialists at the Army Contracting Command—Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., accomplish this as government civilians and as Army Reserve Soldiers.

ACC-APG contract specialists Maureen Cameron, David MacIntyre, Dawn Rogers and Christopher Terhune are also members of the 663rd Contingency Contracting Team in the Army Reserve. Their team is one of 19 contingency contracting teams within the 915th Contracting Support Battalion headquartered in Baltimore,

Md., the only Army Reserve unit with a contingency contracting mission.

“We are truly warrior-citizens,” said Terhune, who is a captain in the Reserve and an intern in ACC-APG’s Edgewood Division. “The training and experiences that I obtain in one capacity reinforces and supports the other. It’s a dynamic that enables success in both roles.”

The complimentary assignments of ACC-APG and the 915th not only enhance their contracting training, but also provide valued experience and workforce development opportunities. Unlike some reserve component units, 915th Soldiers are located

throughout the United States and most members conduct their contract training individually. As employees in the same government organization, the group has the ability to train together within ACC-APG and the only difference in the work environment is the type of clothes worn.

“Working and training with ACC-APG gives us the benefit of working with highly skilled contracting professionals,” said MacIntyre, the 663rd team lead and battalion training officer. “We want our Soldiers to have access to as much hands-on experience as possible to be as technically proficient

(Left to right) Sgt. Dawn Rogers, Staff Sgt. Maureen Cameron, Capt. Christopher Terhune and Lt. Col. David MacIntyre work together in the 663th Contingency Contracting Team and at the Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. (U.S. Army photo by Betsy Kozak)

“We are truly warrior-citizens. The training and experiences that I obtain in one capacity reinforces and supports the other.”

as their active-duty counterparts. When they arrive at a contingency contracting center downrange, they're expected to support the mission starting on day one to the same standards as an active component 51 charlie (acquisition non-commissioned officer)."

MacIntyre, a lieutenant colonel, has been a member of the 915th since its formation in 2008 and served as a contingency contracting officer during tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. For the past four years, he has worked as an ACC-APG civilian within the Installation Division performing contracting actions in support of base operations

MacIntyre is joined in the Installation Division by fellow reservist Cameron.

"I enjoyed this work immensely," said Cameron, a staff sergeant in

uniform who has deployed to Iraq. "I procured items for the forward operating base, built urgent requirements, developed contracts and I learned a lot."

The fourth member of the team, Rogers, a sergeant, recently converted from being a technical writer to an intern contract specialist with the ACC-APG Branch H, Division B, supporting the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization. "I applied for the job opening, interviewed, and then received the job offer immediately. I'm happy to be here," the sergeant said. "It's working out really well how my military duties entwine into my civilian duties. It's the optimal experience to be a civilian 1102 (contracting specialist) and a military 51 charlie because you just can't gain this experience from reading books." ♦

Mapping out careers


(Continued from page 9)

who lead organizations or drive acquisition strategies. The training for this phase is at the senior executive level and focuses on shaping institutional strategy. These individuals are trained to serve as role models and they tend to have excellent communication skills. An employee within this phase typically has 13 or more years of experience, according to the CWWG.

"Once a careerist enters the strategic phase, they have the ability to move in and out to follow their desired career path," said Barbaris. "In contracting, careerists are always learning something new based on their unique assignments. One of the benefits to this career roadmap is that a careerist can change lanes to gain a variety of career experiences. This roadmap provides a holistic approach to managing careers and allows leaders to mentor, counsel and plan for the development of their subordinates."

The CWWG identified a new automated tool currently used by Soldiers known as the Army Career Tracker, a web-based career management system that integrates training, assignment history, and formal/informal education paths for every career series. In 2011, the ACT was deployed to military members and is now being customized for civilian career fields.

"ACT will consolidate training, education and assignment data relevant to position and career level. This aligns with the recommendation by CWWG to develop an automated tool for the career roadmap tracking," Ward pointed out. "The CWWG plans to share its career roadmap data with the ACT team to assist with the 1102 civilian development." ♦



Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols (left) accepts the U.S. Army Contracting Command flag from Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general, Army Materiel Command, during the assumption of command ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

New general officers take the reins at Army Contracting Command

Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

The U.S. Army Contracting Command recently experienced leadership changes at its three general officer level commands within a 90-day period.

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols became the command's first commanding general during a May 17 assumption of command ceremony at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Carol Lowman relinquished her position as the ACC's executive director and assumed duties as the deputy to the commanding general.

Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, Army Materiel Command commanding general, officiated and welcomed

Nichols during the ceremony with nearly 500 Soldiers, Army civilians and guests in attendance.

Dunwoody spoke highly of Nichols during the ceremony.

"Major General Nichols is a true Army superstar," Dunwoody said. "She is a dynamic innovator, strategic thinker, and hard-charging commander, and I am thrilled that she is taking the reins today."

Nichols comes to ACC from Fort Belvoir, Va., where she was the Army's Program Executive Officer, Soldier. She previously served as commanding general, U.S. Central Command Contracting Command in

Iraq. In September 2008 at Fort Belvoir, she became the first commanding general of the Expeditionary Contracting Command, one of ACC's two subordinate commands. Nichols is a 1981 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and has more than 20 years experience in Department of Defense acquisition.

"ACC has done some amazing things since we were established in 2008. I want to keep us on this path of success while strengthening our team, maturing our capabilities and expanding our footprint," said Nichols. "I'm eager to learn more about what you do and how I can help."

“ACC has done some amazing things since we were established in 2008. I want to keep us on this path of success while strengthening our team, maturing our capabilities and expanding our footprint.”

On April 20, Brig. Gen. Theodore Harrison accepted the reigns of the U.S. Army Expeditionary Contracting Command during a change of command ceremony at Redstone Arsenal. Harrison previously served as the deputy director, National Contracting Organization, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Arlington, Va.

No stranger to ECC, Harrison previously served as the commander of the 410th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Brig. Gen. Joseph L. Bass, the outgoing ECC commanding general, is now the director of contracting in the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement) in Arlington, Va.

Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke accepted command of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at a March 28 ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston.

Vollmecke comes to the MICC after serving as the director for contracting in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring, the former MICC commanding general, became the deputy commander for the Joint Theater Support Contracting Command for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. ♦

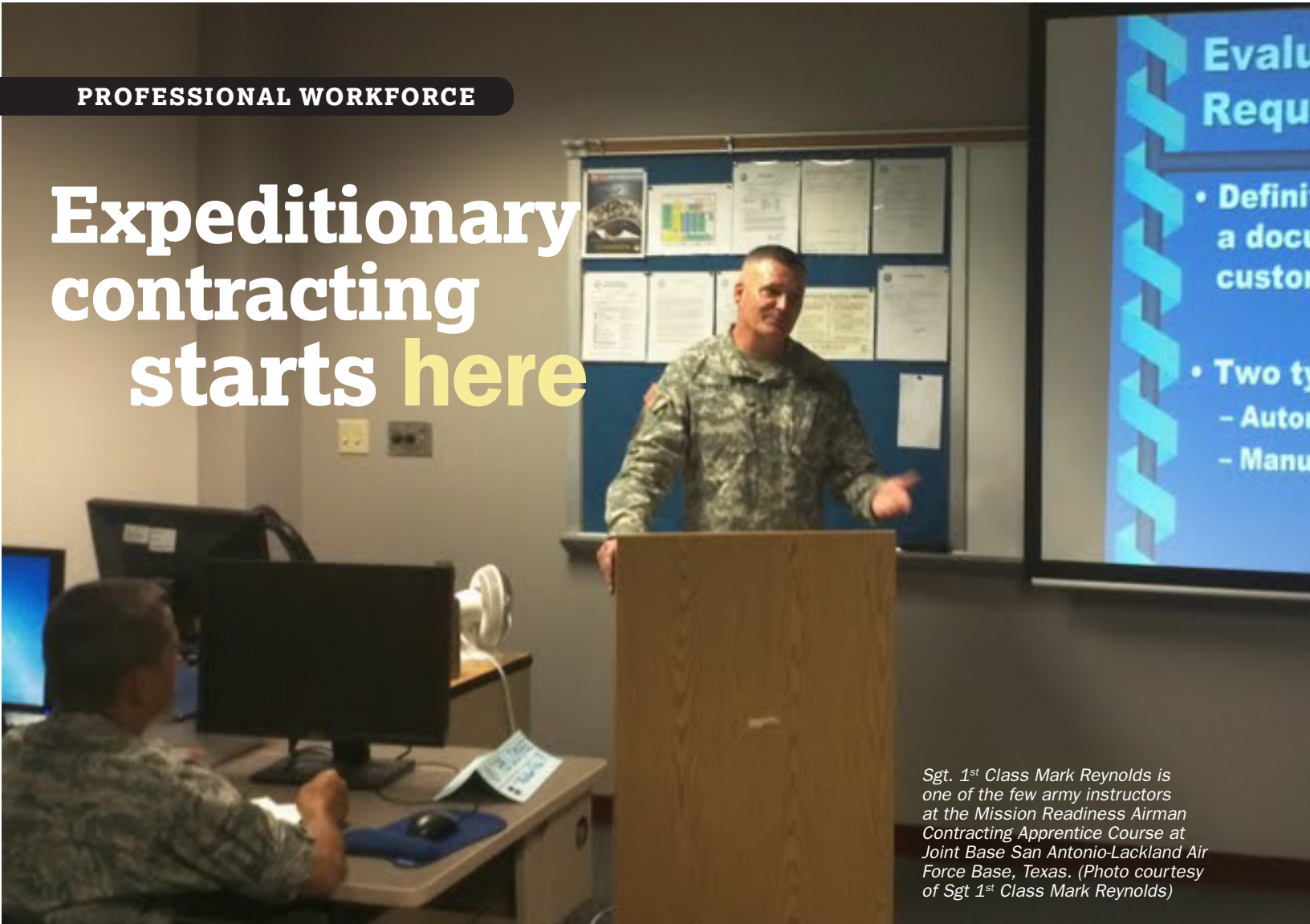


Brig. Gen. Ted Harrison accepted command at the Expeditionary Contracting Command during the April 20 ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke addresses the more than 200 military and civilian guests in attendance at a change of command ceremony March 28 at Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas (U.S. Army photo by Mike O'Rear)

Expeditionary contracting starts here



Sgt. 1st Class Mark Reynolds is one of the few army instructors at the Mission Readiness Airman Contracting Apprentice Course at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. (Photo courtesy of Sgt 1st Class Mark Reynolds)

*By Lt. Col. Martha Brooks
Expeditionary Contracting Command
Public Affairs, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.*

More than just the standard books and lectures associated with classes, the Mission Readiness Airman Contracting Apprentice Course at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, provides a training environment similar to the realities its students will encounter in the field.

The course is one of two where Army noncommissioned officers receive their initial contracting fundamental training qualifying them for the Army military occupational specialty acquisition NCO, 51 charlie. The other is the Defense Acquisition University, Huntsville, Ala.

The instructors are military contracting professionals who have worked in the field and now provide mentoring and coaching to their students. The curriculum, which includes hands-on training, is focused on initial contracting fundamentals, innovation technology and real-world scenarios.

According to MRAC officials, the purpose of hands-on training is two-fold: first, to ensure that students have an opportunity to learn by practical application while being mentored and coached; and second, to assess whether they have mastered the necessary skills to perform contracting functions.

According to senior contracting professionals responsible for training the acquisition noncommissioned officers, there are pros and

cons on which academic curriculum requirements meet or exceed minimum core task requirements for the specialty.

"The advantages of MRAC are the realities we see firsthand in the area of responsibility," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Leigh A. Baumbaugh, commander, Contracting Training Flight, 344th Training Squadron.

"I'm 100 percent confident that we are training our Soldiers and airmen here to a level that allows them to perform their mission when they hit the ground. We put blinders on to the service affiliation our students come from and concentrate on the fact that we are all acquisition professionals," said Baumbaugh.

According to Baumbaugh, the disadvantages of MRAC, though they won't be seen until the end of

“I’m 100 percent confident that we are training our Soldiers and airmen here to a level that allows them to perform their mission when they hit the ground.”

the fiscal year, will be that Soldiers will have to take additional federal acquisition regulation fundamental courses after completion of MRAC.

“Contracting specialists have a requirement to get (Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act) level one certification. The requirement can’t be accomplished without one year of contracting experience,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Murray, command sergeant major, Army Contracting Command. “For that reason alone, contracting specialists are not truly at a disadvantage since they have additional time to work and be mentored on their craft.

“One of the main advantages of the MRAC is its three-week capstone lab where students are placed in a contracting office model,” said Murray. “During the lab students complete 37 purchase requests, with a mixture of purchasing actions using simplified action procedures.”

In November 2007, the Secretary of the Army established an independent commission on Army acquisition and program management to review the lessons learned in recent

operations and to provide forward-looking recommendations.

“The adage, ‘train as we fight,’ is alive and well here at the MRAC,” said Sgt. 1st Class Mark W. Reynolds, U.S. Army senior instructor/liaison. “This joint environment is similar to our contracting office structure down range. Introducing our noncommissioned officers to a truly joint forces environment early in their 51 charlie career will only strengthen their resolve as 51 charlies.”

Baumbaugh said approximately 145 Army contracting specialists have graduated, with an additional 65 projected to graduate this fiscal year. She said the number of Army students has increased annually.

Since the program was established, there have been three Army instructors that have been selected by the school staff to come back and teach, said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Erica Reed, 344th TS instructor supervisor.

“Based on their experience with contracting as well as the insight gained as career noncommissioned officers, they provide tremendous

experience and knowledge to our program,” Reed said.

It’s that experience that MRAC officials want passed on to the students.

“Soldiers entering the carrier field are provided hands-on training and personalized classroom instruction,” Reynolds said. “It’s important to ensure the Soldiers are proficient on the basic tasks within the proficiency guide for contracting officers. While deployed, 51 charlies are taught and encouraged to use reach-back offices to facilitate complex contracting requirements. Contracting has one language and by everyone attending the same training, they all learn that language.”

Offices receiving the new MRAC graduates tend to agree.

“Reports from our field offices state that when they receive a graduate from MRAC they are ready and capable to go work in a contracting office,” Murray said. “They have been provided the skills and, most importantly, the confidence they need to be successful as a contracting noncommissioned officer.” ♦

Army Contracting Command Annual Award Winners

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command,
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—The U.S. Army Contracting Command recognized outstanding individual and team performance at its third annual contracting awards ceremony here May 16.

“It’s an honor for me to recognize the recipients for their hard work and dedication,” said Carol Lowman, then ACC executive director. “These professionals exemplify the best of this command and are the type of individuals others can aspire to become.”

The awards were presented for excellence in acquisition, contracting and small business. Selectees were recognized for their outstanding achievements between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011. An awards panel comprised of representatives from ACC, the Expeditionary Contracting Command, the Mission and Installation Contracting Command and the major ACC contracting centers reviewed more than 200 nominations before making the selections.

This year the big winner was ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., the recipient of nine awards. Teams and personnel from ACC-Redstone Arsenal, Ala., and the Expeditionary Contracting Command received seven awards each. Mission and Installation Contracting Command teams and personnel received five awards. ACC-Warren, Mich., and ACC-Rock Island, Ill., received three awards each. Teams and personnel from ACC-New Jersey and ACC-National Capital Region received two awards each.

Team awards went to:

**Outstanding Workforce
Development Specialist**
Team: Career
Management Team
ACC-NCR

**ACC Innovation
Award (Major Weapon
Systems)**
Apache Sensors
Division-Performance
Based Logistics Team
ACC-RSA

**ACC Innovation Award
(Other than Major
Weapon Systems)**
Expedited Professional
and Engineering Support
Services and Strategic
Services Team
ACC-RSA

ACC Innovation Award
BRAC AUTOMATION Sub-
Integrated Process Team
ACC-Warren

**Outstanding Mission
Support/Business
Operations Award**
OTMWS: Contracting
Operations Team
ACC-APG

**Outstanding Mission
Support/Business
Operations Award**
Non-Acquisition: Human
Resources/Strategic
Planning Team
ACC-Warren

**Acquisition Change
Advocate Awards – Non
Acquisition**
Enterprise Resource
Team
ACC-APG

**Customer Service
Excellence Award**
413 Government
Purchase Card
ECC 413th CSB, Fort
Shafter, Hawaii



**Outstanding
Contingency
Contracting Officer –
Officer**
Maj. Christopher Center
MICC-Fort Drum, N.Y.



**Outstanding
Contingency
Contracting Officer –
Civilian**
Sabin Joseph
ACC-APG



**Outstanding Contracting
Officer – MWS**
Shannon Jewell
ACC-Warren



**Outstanding Workforce
Development Specialist**
Individual: Roxanne
Barbaris
ACC-APG



**Outstanding Contract
Specialist – MWS-
Specialist**
Shannon Hepner
ACC-Warren



**Outstanding Price
Analyst – MWS**
Stephanie Benfante
ACC-NJ



Outstanding Price Analyst – OTMWS
Richard Jenkins
 ACC-NCR



ACC Excellence in Acquisition Leadership – MWS
Joan Detchemendy
 ACC-RSA



ACC Excellence in Acquisition Leadership – OTMWS
Gregory Davies
 ACC-APG



Outstanding Procurement Analyst – MWS
Stephanie Pascale
 ACC-NJ



Outstanding Intern of the Year Award – MWS
Adam Kimbro
 ACC-RSA



Outstanding Intern of the Year Award – OTMWS
Kimberly Ross
 MICC-Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.



Outstanding Active Duty Military Officer Award – MWS
Lt. Col. Jeffrey Caldwell
 ACC-RSA



Outstanding Active Duty NCO Award – OTMWS
Sgt. 1st Class Adriana Underdue
 ACC- APG



Acquisition Change Advocate Awards – OTMWS
Carole Hubbard
 ACC-RSA



Excellence in Direct Sales Contracting
Debby Broyles
 ACC-RI



Small Business Specialist of the Year
Annette Arkeketa-Rendon
 MICC-Fort Sill, Okla.



Small Business Champion
Melanie Johnson
 ACC-RI



Small Business Champion
Bryan Sasaki
 ACC-RSA



Personal Development Achievement Award
Adelaide Tkatch
 ACC-RI

(Continued on page 18)

Intern gains insight through hands-on experience

*Commentary by David M. Hampton
Army Contracting Command–National Capital Region*

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—As an Army Contracting Command–National Capital Region intern, I had the unique experience of accompanying my agency's executive director, Michael R. Hutchison, and Gregory Moore, Kuwait/Qatar Reachback Branch chief, ACC–Rock Island, Ill., on a 12-day developmental assignment to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, and Vicenza, Italy, where I learned important lessons that would have taken years to understand had I not been in a contingency environment:

1. We must work closely with the requiring activity to define contract requirements. Failure to write clear and comprehensive requirements documents leads to problems later. This was evident when I attended a meeting regarding a poorly written performance work statement. A disagreement between the government and contractor about whether the work was within or outside the scope significantly delayed action. Mission progress virtually stopped until the issue was resolved.
2. I learned the importance of contracting officer's representatives. CORs help ensure the government receives the goods and services for which it is paying. Contracting officer's representatives must focus on contract surveillance and evaluating contractor performance. CORs that play a prominent role in the contract administration process will greatly enhance the quality of contract management.
3. There must be collaboration between the requiring activity, contracting office and contractor entities. Regardless of where work is performed, collaborative working relationships between the customer, contracting office, and contractor are essential to success. This is imperative because of sudden schedule changes and external factors that influence work.

The most important lesson I learned was that although the contract can fail, the mission cannot. Contract failure is avoidable, however, if acquisition professionals maintain awareness of deadlines and contract management requirements.

Contracting in the contingency environment is not easy, and it takes skills that are not always taught in the stateside environment. Good interpersonal skills and the willpower and stamina to work 14-hour days at least six days a week are vital. Finally, a person must have a high level of personal character and integrity to ensure Federal Acquisition Regulation principles are followed, even when under pressures that come with the environment. ♦

DAVID M. HAMPTON is an ACC–NCR contract specialist intern (graduating August 2012). He holds a B.A. in economics from the College of William and Mary, and is Level I certified in contracting.

ACC Annual Award Winners

(Continued from page 17)

Award recipients unavailable for photos were:

Outstanding Contingency Contracting Officer – NCO

Master Sgt. Julie Saorrano
ECC–Fort Knox, Ky.

Outstanding Contracting Officer – OTMWS

Gwen Meadows
ACC–APG

Outstanding Contract Specialist – OTMWS

Lisa Nakamoto
ECC–Fort Shafter

Outstanding Procurement Analyst – OTMWS

Maj. Donald Leath
ECC 408th Contracting Support Brigade
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

ACC AbilityOne Award

Deborah Ault
MICC–Fort Knox

Outstanding Active Duty Military Officer Award – OTMWS

Maj. Matthew Phelps
ECC–Kadena Air Base, Japan

Small Business Champion

Donna Campbell
ECC–Fort Shafter

Public Affairs Liaison of the Year

Betsy Kozak
ACC–APG

Small Business Program Supporter of the Year

Bethany Rosser
MICC–Fort Eustis, Va.

Personal Development Achievement Award

Joseph Clay
ECC–Fort Shafter



Employees recognized for their support

By Betsy Kozak, Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Two Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground employees have been recognized by internal and external customers for their outstanding work and support.

Larry Mize, contracting officer, received a career service award from the Baltimore Federal Executive Board and Marilyn Shortle, contracting officer, received a certificate of achievement from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Army (Procurement).

Mize received a bronze medal in the category of Excellence in Federal Career Awards Program as an Outstanding Professional (Non-Supervisory) for Technical, Scientific and Program Support. The nomination was initiated at Fort Detrick, Md., and awarded at the Federal Executive Board ceremony in Baltimore, Md.

Although Mize is a member of the Natick Division, he works at Fort Detrick providing contracting support to Chemical Biological Medical Systems, a project management office of the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense. Mize was nominated by Nicole Kilgore, deputy project manager for the Joint Vaccine Acquisition Program.

"I nominated Larry because he continually goes the extra mile to support the JVAP team," Kilgore stated. "He is a valuable asset to CBMS and I personally had the opportunity to work closely with him on the preparation of a request for proposal through source selection to contract award. Through this interaction it was obvious he has a very



Larry Mize

solid understanding of the entire process and has a strong work ethic worthy of being nominated."

Mize explained, "I take my work very seriously and focus on customer concerns, so I consider this award an acknowledgement that CBMS understands what I'm trying to accomplish."

Shortle received a certificate for her accomplishments while on a six-month developmental assignment with DASA (P), Procurement Policy and Support Directorate. During her assignment, she developed and

"I take my work very seriously and focus on customer concerns."

implemented end-user certificates, justifications and approvals, congressional notifications, and heads of contracting appointment letters.

"Professional developmental assignments are an excellent avenue for contracting civilian workforce members," said Kim D. Denver, deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Procurement).



Marilyn Shortle

According to Denver, competitive training assignments give contracting and acquisition career program employees the ability to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be highly competitive in positions of leadership and greater responsibility.

"I love to learn," stated Shortle, a member of the Belvoir Division with 14 years contracting experience. "It was a great opportunity and I gained a wealth of knowledge."

Shortle applied for the developmental assignment through the

career program website and her application was endorsed by the ACC-APG executive director. She was competitively selected for the assignment to assist in the development of Army policies and procedures for contracting career management.

"It was a wonderful experience and I would do it again if given the opportunity," Shortle said. ♦

Scheil captures 2012 ACC NCO of the Year title

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting
Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—After three days of intense competition, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Scheil, 413th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, has been selected as the 2012 U.S. Army Contracting Command Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. during the event here June 6-8.

ACC Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols and ACC Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray congratulated and praised Scheil and the other NCOs who competed in the event.

“It is awesome to see our warrior contracting spirit reflected in the eyes of these Soldiers,” Nichols said. “I thank you for coming forward and going above and beyond what was asked of you. You truly exemplify the warrior ethos.”

Scheil, an acquisition, logistics, and technology contracting NCO, 51 charlie, with the 413th CSB’s 715th Contingency Contracting Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska, outscored his fellow NCOs with consistent scores in 13 events that challenged the Soldiers’ mental and physical skills.

“I guess I did better than I imagined,” Scheil said. “Competitions like this keep you up to date on things and keep you motivated to do what you need to do as a Soldier. Yes, we are contracting specialists, but we are Soldiers first.”

Scheil finished with 2,657 points out of a possible 3,540.

“Events like this help to prepare



The 2012 Army Contracting Command Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Scheil, 413th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, receives his first place trophy from Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, at the June 8 ceremony at Redstone Arsenal, Ala. (U.S. Army photo by Larry McCaskill.)

a Soldier to be a better leader. Coming down here and meeting all these great NCOs has given me the chance to learn even more from them,” said Scheil. “I haven’t done most of the tasks in a while so I have been practicing with my team and Soldiers back at Fort Wainwright.”

Murray was impressed with how each of the NCOs pushed forward and gave each challenge their best effort.

“Over the past three days, each of these competitors has endured long hours and demon-

strated great stamina, technical and tactical skills in completing 13 different tasks,” Murray said. “I am very proud of each one of them. Throughout this competition I could see that warrior spirit in each of the competitors as they gave 110 percent effort in each event. They have represented their units well. Each one of the brigade representatives demonstrated that they are the best within their units for their technical and tactical knowledge, competence, and execution of Army tasks.”



Staff Sgt. Desmond Culler; 410th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas, searches for an intersection on a map during the warrior tasks battle drills competition. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

The NCOs competing this year were: Scheil; Staff Sgt. Booker Jordan, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Kaiserslautern, Germany (first runner-up); Sgt. 1st Class Lachad Jefferson, 408th Contracting Support Brigade, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait (second runner-up); Staff Sgt. Desmond Culler; 410th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Staff Sgt. Deaquennet Thomas, 411th Contracting Support Brigade, Camp Humphries, Republic of Korea; and Staff Sgt. Brandon Carroll, 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Sam Houston.

The annual event included a formal board, an urban orienteer course, day and night land navigation and a challenging foot march up one of the mountains at Redstone Arsenal's Vincent Park, complete with 40-pound rucksack.

Each of the NCOs received a certificate of achievement, a box of Army chocolates, an ACC lanyard and various coins of excellence from the ACC leadership. Jordan, the first runner-up, also received a trophy and a mini football signed by Nichols and Murray. Jefferson, the second runner-up, received a signed mini ACC football.

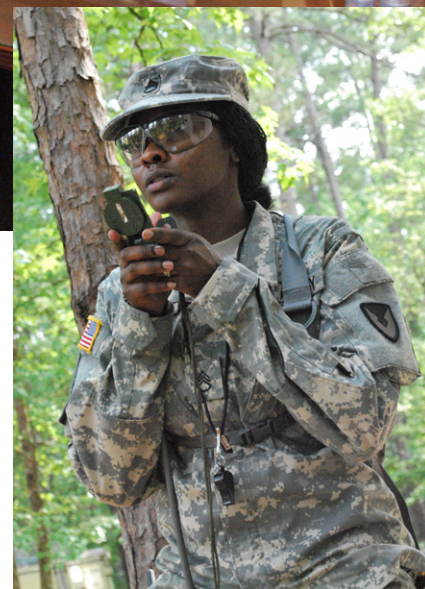


Staff Sgt. Brandon Carroll, 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas stands at attention as members of the NCO of the Year board conduct an inspection of his uniform. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

In addition to the items listed above, Scheil received an Army Commendation Medal, an NCO of the Year trophy, and a full-size signed ACC football.

Scheil will represent ACC at the Army Materiel Command's NCO of the Year competition in July.

"Being here will help me to better prepare the Soldier from our unit who participates next year," Scheil said. ♦



Staff Sgt. Deaquennet Thomas, 411th Contracting Support Brigade, Camp Humphries, Republic of Korea, shoots as azimuth prior to heading out during the land navigation challenge. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Scheil, 413th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, finishing the 10-mile foot march as Sgt 1st Class Lascelles Cuff, cadre, records his time. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

GFEBS changes the way the Army does business



Rebecca Ashby, General Fund Enterprise Business System instructor, provides an overview of a purchase order as part of a GFEBS course (U.S. Army photo by Betsy Kozak)

By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command—Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Lower your shields and prepare to be assimilated - resistance is futile! Star Trek fans are familiar with this command from the Borg, but now there's a new kind of Borg ready to establish a collective hive, the General Fund Enterprise Business System, commonly referred to as GFEBS.

GFEBS is a web-enabled financial asset and accounting management system designed to standardize, streamline and share critical data across the Army. This financial system was fielded through a series

of waves beginning with the pilot deployment in 2008. The final wave is currently underway with the April kick-off of Wave 8a throughout the ACC headquarters and Wave 8b will start in July at ACC-APG.

"GFEBS represents the first Army-wide attempt to change the way business is conducted," said James Carroll, GFEBS site point of contact. "The system will produce vital, real-time information for Army leadership and overseers such as Department of Defense and Congress. The main objective of GFEBS is to improve accountability and

stewardship and to standardize financial and business processes.

"GFEBS will bring a majority of the Army financial management into a single system allowing the Army to fully assess performance and costs," he continued. "The system also empowers leaders at all levels by providing real-time costs of operations and the costs that affect their budgets.

At full deployment, GFEBS will have more than 79,000 budget and financial end-users at approximately 200 Army installations worldwide, according to James. GFEBS will be

“GFEBS will bring a majority of the Army financial management into a single system allowing the Army to fully assess performance and costs.”

one of the world’s largest enterprise financial systems.

Prior to GFEBS, the Army prepared reports to monitor and control the obligation and expenditure of financial resources. Through the enactment of government legislation such as the Chief Financial Officer Act of 1990 and the Government Management Reform Act of 1994 and subsequent accountability laws, Congress mandated that all federal agencies produce auditable financial statements to enable more effective internal management and to hold organizations accountable for their financial activities.

“Currently, a large percentage of time is spent processing transactions, controlling interfaces and generating reports,” said Carroll. “As GFEBS is implemented, the goal is to reduce the time spent processing transactions and to focus on financial analysis activities. GFEBS will also enable audit readiness and real-time access to information for better financial decision making.”

GFEBS will replace current legacy financial systems including the Standard Operation and Maintenance Army Research and Development System used by ACC. After the initial launch of GFEBS, ACC users will face a transition period where GFEBS and SOMARDS are used simultaneously. SOMARDS will be used only to maintain legacy data until appropriations and accounts within the system are closed.

“I have experienced three main obstacles as ACC-APG approaches the go-live date,” said Becki Eberhardt, Budget Branch chief. “These include the natural resistance to change, increased workload demands throughout the transition period and the numerous training requirements. As a team, we are working through these challenges and are dedicated to the GFEBS implementation.”

User training responsibilities are aligned with GFEBS roles that correspond to nine business process areas: cost management, equip-

ment and assets, financials, funds management and budget, manage accounts receivables/reimbursables, plant maintenance, project systems, real property, and spending chain.

According to Eberhardt, the role-based training is a combination of classroom and web-based instruction and includes roles such as cash balancing processor, funds execution controller, financial reviewer and vendor master data controller, just to mention a few. There are more than 150 roles within GFEBS and each user is assigned multiple roles depending on their duty functions. Within each of these roles, there are between one to five training requirements and this is in addition to the required global courses for every role.

As roles are defined and training is completed, ACC will enter a new world of financial management. Although challenges are expected, ACC is prepared to transform to a GFEBS environment for meeting mission demands, said Eberhardt. ♦

Program integrator provides embedded contracting expertise to PEO Soldier

By Betsy Kozak

Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Essential to the Army Contracting Command–Aberdeen Proving Ground, customer relations is a high priority.

To gain additional leverage with its customers, ACC-APG has placed highly trained experts, program integrators, into program offices to acquire programmatic information and requirements data.

A program integrator serves as a liaison between the customer and the ACC-APG workforce to facilitate contracting actions. The duties of this position are two-fold. First, the individual must have extensive contracting experience to serve as an advisor to customers. Second, the individual must have internal knowledge of the program to guide the contracting workforce. This function is offered through a support agreement between the customer and ACC-APG and is funded by the customer.

As a program integrator, Angie Sawyer works with the Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier at Fort Belvoir, Va. Through her efforts, the ACC-APG contracting workforce enables the PEO to provide state-of-the-art equipment to the Soldier.

“Dozens of contracting professionals in both the Aberdeen and Natick divisions provide support to the program managers within the PEO,” Sawyer said. “In fiscal year 2011, the ACC-APG executed 1,309 contracting actions totaling over \$1.7 billion for the PEO. The ACC-APG provides 90 percent of all of the PEO’s contracting support.”

It was this workload that led ACC-APG’s leadership to establish a dedicated PI position within PEO Soldier. Sawyer’s 24 years of contracting experience contributed to her selection as PI.

“Angie was a logical candidate,” said Steven Bryant, ACC-APG’s deputy director. “She was already



Angie Sawyer, program integrator for the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground, reviews contracting data with customer Dan Kitts, deputy product manager for Soldier Maneuver Sensors. Sawyer works as a PI with the Program Executive Office Soldier at Fort Belvoir, Va. (U.S. Army photo by Betsy Kozak)

residing near Fort Belvoir, had a wealth of experience in contracting and a proven record of working well with customers. Since the ACC-APG had experienced success with a PI position within the Joint PEO Chemical and Biological Defense, it was a logical step to expand the concept to PEO Soldier.”

Sawyer has weekly contact with contracting officers and specialists to facilitate communications and resolve work issues on PEO contracts.

“Having face-to-face interaction on a regular basis between both contracting and the customer helps us collectively understand what needs to be done to execute actions as quickly as possible,”

Sawyer added. “The concept of a PI is multi-faceted. Being in close proximity to the PEO enables me to bridge the geographical gap between the contracting staff at APG and the customer. Since APG is located almost 100 miles away from the PEO, it’s difficult for busy contracting officers and specialists to spend as much time as they would like addressing the many issues that arise on a daily basis on the wide variety of programs.”

The PI position is an essential ingredient to ACC-APG’s support to PEO Soldier, according to Susan A. Greider, chief, Aberdeen Division D.

“Angie provides the greatly sought-after translation and facilitation

of the program manager and contracting officer perspective to clarify each other's objective," Greider said. "This clarity of objective allows the team to focus on the preparation and timely execution of regulatory compliant

ments were implemented that resulted in savings of cost, time and resources. The PI helped communicate what we were trying to achieve and offered possible options to encourage solutions through criti-

"Contract quality has improved which results in enhanced contract management and oversight, which saves time, money and resources."

and enforceable contracts. Contract quality has improved which results in enhanced contract management and oversight, which saves time, money and resources."

Sawyer assists the program managers and project leaders across the full scope of their acquisitions. This includes early brainstorming of acquisition strategies and plans, facilitation of source selections, and troubleshooting any contractual issues after award. The PI concept allows both the PEO and ACC-APG leadership to have a horizontal and holistic view of their contracting progress.

"PEO Soldier identified the need for contracting support within the organization through program manager input," said Jerry Varela, director, Acquisition, Policy and Oversight. "The program managers wanted dedicated contracting advice and assistance to support a wide range of PEO products including over 400 end items."

The initial PI support within PEO Soldier started within one of the PM offices. Col. Stephanie Foster, program manager, Soldier, Sensors and Lasers embraced the idea of a PI and Sawyer became an integral part of program planning on each of the PM SSL contracts.

"Having a dedicated PI made a significant difference in navigating the contracting process," said Foster. "Through Angie's efforts, improve-

cal thinking. It has been a win-win situation as ACC-APG and the PEO work together to reach a desired end state."

The PI concept gained support and acceptance throughout the PEO. The PEO leadership realized that having PI involvement across all of the programs could provide improved oversight into the overall health of PEO contracting. With a recent reorganization, the PI position was restructured at the PEO level, providing support to four program managers.

"Sawyer is now part of the formal organizational structure and her concurrence is required on all acquisition packages," Varela said. "With her internal involvement, the PEO has experienced an improvement in the quality, timeliness and completeness of acquisition documentation."

Sawyer provides training workshops for the PEO employees and prepared an 82-page acquisition training guide to serve as a desk reference for program managers. She also provided guidance and articulated contracting policy such as the requirements of the new efficiency initiatives.

According to Dan Kitts, deputy product manager for Soldier Maneuver Sensors, a PI acts in three capacities: translator, problem solver and facilitator.

"The PM focuses on cost, schedule, performance and the contracting

agency focuses on Federal Acquisition Regulation provisions, award documentation, reviews by the small business, competition advocate, and attorneys," said Kitts. "Angie is supremely competent in both languages and can help each party understand the motivations of the other."

One example of Sawyer's work was the contracting actions for the pelvic protection systems. She communicated daily with team members to ensure that all pertinent contracting language was not omitted from the acquisition package and she personally reviewed numerous drafts of the statement of work, technical evaluation summaries, and independent government cost estimates to ensure the efficacy of all contract language.

She was recognized for her work by Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, former PEO Soldier and now commanding general of the Army Contracting Command.

According to Nichols, Sawyer contributed significantly to the success of this effort with her precise talents and interpersonal skills.

"I love my job and find it very satisfying to work with both the customers and contracting personnel to figure out the most efficient way to do things," Sawyer said. "Although both are working toward a common goal of getting critical items in the hands of Soldiers, sometimes translation is needed between the two organizations to find the most efficient and resource-saving mechanisms to employ.

"Communication is an important part of being a PI," she added. "My goal is to try and make the contracting officer's job a little easier by running down issues for them while helping the customer think through and better understand the contracting process. This avoids unnecessary re-work later." ♦

By Liz Adrian
Army Contracting Command–Rock Island
Public Affairs, Rock Island, Ill.

Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.—Momentum on the much-anticipated Enhanced Army Global Logistics Enterprise acquisition strategy is building after months of hard work behind the scenes, according to Army Contracting Command–Rock Island officials.

EAGLE is a unique acquisition strategy that will combine an installation's maintenance, supply and transportation services contracts into a single source contracting service.

According to Melanie Johnson, former EAGLE chief and current director of field support at ACC-RI, the strategy will benefit the government through greater efficiencies and more contract oversight, while offering more contracting opportunities for small businesses because all annual installation logistics requirements between \$1 million and \$35.5 million will be small-business set asides.

In October 2010, the U.S. Army Sustainment Command assumed operational control of directorates of logistics within the U.S., as well as DOLs overseas. EAGLE will also support Army prepositioned stocks, theater-provided equipment, in-theater maintenance, left-behind equipment, pre-deployment training equipment, new equipment training, new equipment fielding and upgraded and repaired equipment.

EAGLE's acquisition strategy was influenced by two directives: the Better Buying Power Directive championed by Ashton B. Carter, then the undersecretary of defense for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology and currently the deputy secretary of defense; and the Optimization of Service Contracting



“There has been significant interest from industry, so I expect to see a great number of proposals submitted from contractors to become qualified BOA holders.”

which was developed by Secretary of the Army John McHugh. These directives focus on reducing overall costs, standardizing performance, expanding competition and increasing opportunities to small business.

ACC-RI has had a hand in the EAGLE program since the decision was made to transfer the DOLs from

Installation Management Command to Army Sustainment Command, said Johnson.

In December 2010, ACC-RI officially established an EAGLE contracting office headed by Johnson.

On March 9, Richard Ginman, director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Office of the un-



Melanie Johnson, former EAGLE chief and current ACC-RI Director of Field Support, speaks with a crowd of business professionals about the EAGLE Acquisition Strategy at a Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce meeting, held at the Deere Harvester Credit Union in Moline, Ill., on April 17. (U.S. Army photo by Liz Adrian)

der Secretary of Defense, approved the acquisition strategy after nearly a year of market research, preparing and staffing a cost-benefit analysis, strategy creation, briefings to senior military leaders and gaining approvals. On April 20, the request for proposal outlining annual requirements was released and is expected to close in early June.

"In the RFP, we laid out all of the terms and conditions that will flow down to the respective task orders for these requirements," Johnson said. "We will evaluate the proposals to establish criteria and what we're looking for are prime contractors, not subcontractors."

The team is looking for prime

contractors to submit technical proposals and past performance information for the evaluation.

"At this step, we are not requesting any pricing information because there are significant costs involved for contractors to put cost proposals together," Johnson said. "Those won't be required until a task order requirement is issued because each task order is going to be a unique requirement in and of itself."

Officials said once the RFP closes and the proposals are evaluated, basic ordering agreements will be executed with all qualifying contractors. BOAs are written understandings between the government and contractors, not contracts. For a

contractor to be qualified for a BOA, they have to be acceptable in both the technical and past performance criteria. There is no limit on the number of BOAs that will be issued.

Contracting officials anticipate BOAs will be in place at some point this summer and once issued, task order competitions will commence.

The EAGLE strategy is beneficial to the government because it allows the Army to take an enterprise approach to logistics. According to Johnson, for installation logistics the functions for supply, maintenance and transportation support services will be consolidated into one logistics provider per installation. This will reduce redundant services, excess capacity and the number of contracts to administer and oversee.

Also, where practicable, EAGLE will utilize standardized performance work statements, quality assurance surveillance plans, and in conjunction with having established qualified contractors, will streamline the task order competition. Logistics requirements will be advertised on an annual basis and will allow for non-BOA holding contractors to become qualified, increasing competition.

In addition, small businesses can elect to create joint ventures with other small businesses to compete for task orders or they can team up with prime contractors.

"There has been significant interest from industry, so I expect to see a great number of proposals submitted from contractors to become qualified BOA holders," said Johnson.

Over the next several months, Johnson said the ACC-RI and ASC EAGLE teams will be dedicated to evaluating the proposals and executing BOAs. Immediately following will be the task order competitions. ♦



ACC gathers expertise, efforts to **solve business problems** in four complex areas of contracting

By Virginia E. Mitchell
Contracting Operations,
Headquarters, U.S. Army
Contracting Command,
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

The U.S. Army Contracting Command has established communities of practice to help its business processes and practices look and behave more alike than differently in critical, complex areas of interest across the enterprise.

“A community of practice provides a forum for subject-matter experts and practitioners of a discipline to interact and to share knowledge and experiences pertinent to their tasks, and to solve business problems,” said J.R. Richardson, chief, ACC Contracting Operations. “CoPs provide a mechanism for individuals to keep current in the developments within a shared discipline through communication.”

ACC is developing four communities: source selection, foreign military sales, peer review, and cost and price. With outreach to other organizations within and outside the Army, CoP membership has grown continually.

Establishing a CoP “means identifying a champion and senior advisors who embrace each of the communi-

ty’s goals and objectives,” Richardson said. “In addition, the communities will have members and other special advisors who are knowledgeable and experienced in the particular discipline as well as committed to the community. While each of the communities are unique and require their leaders to have specific skill sets and backgrounds, they also cross over in certain ways and are encouraged to cross-communicate and share resources whenever needed.”

For example, the source selection community of practice and peer review CoP share members since the source selection process is directly impacted by the peer review process. Findings, whether positive or negative, identified during peer reviews may be items that should be shared across the enterprise such that they are institutionalized and we learn from them.

According to Jason Detko, chief, ACC Contracting Operations, Contracting Policy Division, the concept of a community of practice is not a new one. It is essentially a

group of people who have a desire to communicate, collaborate, share information and experience, and find ways to solve problems and issues within their area of practice or profession.

“It is important to establish communities around areas of practice that are complex and where capability and expertise must be sustained,” Detko said. “The government is experiencing a ‘brain drain’ as the baby boomers draw closer to retirement. We must find ways to capture and pass on what they know. In addition to working toward standardizing and achieving consistency in business processes, preserving existing knowledge and growing new expertise is a mission readiness imperative. Further, establishing a ready capability to communicate and collaborate virtually to assist practitioners is a valuable, efficient approach given the budgetary constraints across the government.”

Richardson suggested that the idea isn’t so much to do things differently, but rather to view and do

Members of the Source Selection Community of Practice gather from around the country, both in person and virtually, to share their ideas at Defense Acquisition University's Huntsville campus. Several briefings were provided and the group discussed various topics over the week-long offsite. (U.S. Army photo by Beth Clemons)

BUSINESS PROCESSES

things more alike than differently across the enterprise. This concept is in keeping with the strategic priority to standardize, improve, and ensure high-quality contracting support, business processes, and policies across the organization.

"Even within the same organization, there can be vast differences in the way the same practice, action, or activity is thought of and executed," Richardson said.

One example, Richardson said, would be the point at which the contracting office is engaged in the process of preparing a complex service requirement to be competitively awarded could vary from program to program but can be a determining factor in the success and timeliness of its execution. Early involvement by all stakeholders enables the team to reach a common understanding of roles and responsibilities, critical documentation requirements, and realistic milestone schedule from acquisition planning through contract award.

"The objective is to work toward a more consistent approach to processes and execution, as well as apply best practices and lessons learned. It can make cross-utilization of resources inside and outside organizations easier. Over time, when our likeness begins to overcome our differentness wherever possible, we will likely see that industry will also benefit as the solicitation and source selection process becomes more consistent and predictable," said Richardson.

The Source Selection CoP was the first to be stood up within ACC, borne of an integrated process team established to produce source selection training in support of the Department of Defense Source Selection Procedures.

"When DoD marked July 1, 2011, as the issuance date for the new procedures, the need for a CoP specializing in the business of source selection became crystal clear," Richardson said.

It is important that the CoPs reach out beyond the Army and into other DoD entities, Richardson noted.

"The SS-CoP membership is a joint-service program," Richardson said. "In addition to representation from most ACC organizations, there is now member representation from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Program Executive Office Simula-

reviewed by the SS-CoP with further vetting across the Army, Detko said. The draft AS3 is currently in the review process at DASA (P), and there is coordination taking place to resolve questions as it moves forward.

The SS-CoP developed a website, with a team discussion board for internal CoP collaboration, a general discussion board where questions can be submitted, a frequently asked question board, and the "tip of the day," Richardson said.

"There are also highly relevant articles from various sources, to include those from the National

"The objective is to work toward a more consistent approach to processes and execution."

tion, Training, and Instrumentation, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement), Army Medical Command, the Air Force Acquisition Center of Excellence, the Naval Air Systems Command's Acquisition Center of Excellence, and the Defense Acquisition University."

Detko said one of the immediate benefits of the SS-CoP was the training created for the DoD source selection procedures.

"In addition to the charter and communication plan, this was the group's first tasking, Detko said. The training was delivered to the various organizations by their respective SS-CoP members with the assistance of the ACC Office of Counsel," he said.

Another major undertaking of the SS-CoP was revision of the Army Source Selection Manual, now entitled the Army Source Selection Supplement to the DoD Source Selection Procedures. This document is now aligned with the new DoD procedures. It was written and

Contract Management Association posted under 'tools of the trade,' and a command counsel corner - news you can use tab that provides a breakdown of recent, relevant Government Accountability Office and Court of Federal Claims cases." Richardson said.

"Communities of practice are true force multipliers for the global contracting community to leverage and share resources across the joint enterprise," remarked Detko.

Access to view the Source Selection Community of Practice Army Contracting Command Portal/SharePoint site, https://acc.aep.army.mil/Contract_Operations/SSCOP/default.aspx, is limited to registered users. Register at Army Material Command Enterprise Portal <https://adfs.aep.army.mil/Registration/default.aspx> with a valid DOD Common Access Card selecting email certificate when prompted. For more information contact Virginia Mitchell at virginia.e.mitchell.civ@mail.mil. ♦

Program improves contract administration

By Daniel P. Elkins

Mission and Installation Contracting Command Public Affairs Office
Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas



SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command here continue to implement phases of its quality assurance program aimed at improving contract administration and oversight to help ensure Army organizations are getting what they pay for.

The program builds upon steps already being taken by the Army to address deficiencies identified in various reports from the 2007 Gansler Commission, the Government Accountability Office and the Army Audit Agency.

Focused primarily on expeditionary contracting operations, MICC leaders took lessons learned from the commission's findings to strengthen the compliance of contracts let in the continental United States with federally established quality control standards and requirements.

"The reports identified the Army had a material weakness in contract administration and oversight and documentation of that oversight," said Joe Merry, a senior quality assurance specialist with the MICC here. "In many cases, we didn't have a lot of documentation to support what we've paid contractors."

While previously assigned to the Defense Contract Management Agency, Merry often found that when a contract was written, the government "didn't do a very good job of defining requirements, which made it difficult to hold a contractor accountable for performance or defined outcomes."

To address that, the quality assurance program calls for the placement

of quality assurance specialists at MICC subordinate units to team with contracting officers and specialists to assist in pre- and post-award contract management and oversight as well as a more robust training calendar for contracting officer representatives who, in many cases, are the face of contracting to contractors.

MICC quality assurance specialists are acquisition professionals who serve as functional experts in contract quality assurance and oversight and provide valuable insight into the development of measurable contract requirements to hold contractors accountable for performance and responsible for quality control, said Pat Hogston, MICC director of contracting operations.

In 2011, positions were created to add quality assurance specialists to MICC subordinate units. Forty-nine individuals were hired to fill QA positions throughout the command before a hiring pause went into effect. That number includes 10 interns, which also entails a training element. Quality assurance specialists are in place at more than 60 percent of the organization's 40-plus sites as officials here await an ease in hiring restrictions.

Merry said the program's effectiveness relies on a teaming approach between MICC acquisition members and a bit of a culture change.

"The MICC is a contracting officer-centric organization. They are ultimately responsible for everything in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, which allows for the use of other specialists," he said. "Turning over the oversight piece of contracting to quality assurance specialists is

a hard thing to do."

David Garrett, a quality assurance specialist at the MICC headquarters, said the teaming of acquisition professionals in contracting and quality assurance ultimately leads to the customers' needs being met in a more effective manner.

"Before, we had to be reactive because the contract had already been let," Garrett said. "Now we're working with mission customers to identify requirements in such a way that contractors are accountable."

That accountability is often accomplished through the efforts of contracting officer representatives who can be responsible for the surveillance of several contractors as an additional duty to their primary job. As part of the quality assurance program, Garrett said quality assurance specialists are responsible for training, mentoring and performing oversight of CORs. The MICC's 12 certified instructors have ramped up the number of training classes for CORs from 23 in 2011 to more than 75 thus far in 2012 and have trained more than 650 individuals this year alone.

"We focus the classroom training on tasks we're asking the contracting officer representatives to perform for us such as surveillance as well as other areas of instruction they may not get from online training," Garrett said. "What gets watched gets done."

Merry added that the concentrated effort in face-to-face training with CORs and resulting payback in improved contractor performance ensures that needs of Soldiers and their families are being met.

"By working with our customers to develop requirements with measurable outcomes up front before a contract is awarded, it's easier to hold a contractor accountable later," he said. "Quality assurance specialists don't own the entire process, but they certainly add value and will influence a better outcome." ♦

Increase in oversight and reporting capabilities found in virtual suite of tools

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting
Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala—Military contracting professionals within the Army Contracting Command are closer to having the means to provide a higher level of reporting and oversight capability with the fielding of its virtual contracting enterprise suite of tools and software.

“One suite of tools, one look and feel for all Army contracting professionals, means our Soldiers and civilians will be able to rely on the same set of tools regardless of where or for whom they work - including in an expeditionary environment,” said Michael Thompson, chief, Virtual Contracting Enterprise Division within the Contracting Operations Directorate. “Having to play catch-up on systems adversely impacts our ability to provide mission and contingency operations support to our Soldiers. The Army, Army Materiel Command and ACC need to have everyone on one set of tools and business processes so we can easily shift workload to efficiently and effectively support our customer.”

“The VCE was selected by the Army leadership to fix many of the contracting deficiencies identified in the 2007 Gansler Commission report on Army contracting,” said Matthew Meinert, VCE Operations and Future Concepts Division, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. “The VCE was established to standardize as much as possible the business and contracting processes across the Army so its contracting professionals would have the necessary tools and processes in place to perform its mission.”

“For the first time, the Army will have complete oversight into its contracting mission, workload, resources, and support to the war fighter.”

According to Meinert and Thompson, the goal of the VCE is to field an Army-wide contracting solution for its contracting professionals and customers. The tools will provide contracting officers, managers and Army leaders reporting and oversight capabilities lacking prior to the 2007 Gansler Commission.

“For the first time, the Army will have complete oversight into its contracting mission, workload, resources, and support to the war fighter,” Meinert said. “Having a standardized tool set and business processes will enable the Army to manage workloads more efficiently, ensuring our war fighters are provided the exceptional support they so richly deserve.”

The VCE platform relies heavily on information technology but is managed out of the ACC Contracting Operations Business Systems Directorate.

“When the VCE office was originally stood up in late 2009, the leadership in ACC, the Army Materiel Command and the Department of the Army decided the VCE should be designed and managed by contracting professionals with support from the program managers and technical communities,” Meinert explained.

“This team of contracting professionals has a wide breadth of experience. With contracting officers managing the tools it became a natural fit for the CONOPS directorate.”

Thompson said the team works closely with the CONOPS policy and quality assurance divisions ensuring the tools reflect the current policy guidance and reporting requirements for meeting ACC and higher headquarters oversight responsibilities. The ACC G6 chief information officer provides infrastructure support by helping VCE personnel manage hardware and service level agreements with the Redstone Directorate of Information Management and Program Manager – Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Enterprise Systems and Services.

“The VCE team has been instructed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary to the Army (Procurement) to field the VCE across the entire Army,” Meinert said. The team is currently fielding the VCE to ACC, Army Corps of Engineers, Army Medical Command, and U.S. Army Central Command. The team has also begun discussions for fielding VCE to the National Guard. Additionally, certain tools within the VCE like its dashboards and business intelligence reporting tools are being used by the Army program executive office and program manager community.”

The tools are available at <https://accportal.army.mil> for all ACC employees and organizations. The team has trained approximately 85 percent of the offices that will be using VCE and expect to have the rest trained by year end. ♦

Renovated Long Barracks new home to MICC

By Daniel P. Elkins
Mission and Installation Contracting
Command Public Affairs, Joint Base San
Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas



Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring presents retired Master Sgt. Givens Forsythe a brick symbolizing the men and women who have served in the Long Barracks since its construction in 1885 as part of the barracks ribbon-cutting ceremony March 27 at Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Mission and Installation Contracting Command officials marked their move to the historic Long Barracks with a ribbon-cutting ceremony here March 28 attracting more than 250 distinguished military visitors, local civic leaders and guests.

“The ceremony marks a new chapter in the life of this historic structure and a new chapter in the Mission and Installation Contracting Command,” said Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring, former MICC commanding general. “This building has been an integral part of much of our Army’s history. It’s an old Soldier indeed and one that will now continue to serve the Army and Joint Base San Antonio

for many years to come.”

Renovations to the Long Barracks costing approximately \$25 million got under way in September 2009 and now affords members of the MICC more than 72,000 square feet of modern office space and storage. That includes more than 220 cubicles, 53 offices, five conference rooms, eight large and small break rooms, and two source selection evaluation board meeting rooms.

Attending the ceremony and recognized by Leisenring was retired Master Sgt. Givens Forsythe, who was assigned as a cook to Headquarters Company, 23rd Infantry and lived on the first floor of Bldg. 613 in 1939.

“I’ve been in and out of this building a few times, and it’s a beautiful building,” Forsythe said. “The ceremony was really something; I won’t forget it.”

The 91-year-old Lytle, Texas, resident said his duties as a cook in an era before refrigeration included hauling 300-pound blocks of ice to coolers to keep food cooled. Earning \$21 a month as a private, he and his fellow cooks fed Soldiers three meals a day for as little as 37 cents a day.

The Long Barracks now serves as home for the MICC headquarters, Mission Contracting Center-Fort Sam Houston and Mission Contracting Office-Fort Sam Houston. ♦

Supporting The Warfighter Directly

Room in the Army Acquisition Corps for reclassifying NCOs

Lt. Col. Dennis McGowan, director, Mission Contracting Office - Fort Bragg, N.C., briefs local Soldiers on the rolls and responsibilities of acquisition corps soldiers.

U.S. Army Contracting Command

UNCLASSIFIED

By Maj. Douglas N. Ralph
639th Contingency Contracting Team
Mission Contracting Office—Fort Bragg, N.C.

FORT BRAGG, N.C.—As the Army reduces in size, reclassification into the acquisition corps may be an option for qualified Soldiers to stay in the Army.

While the rest of the Army is cutting back, the contracting career field, acquisition noncommissioned officer military occupational specialty 51 charlie, is expected to grow by almost 50 percent of its current population by the end of fiscal year 2013. The career field needs more officers and NCOs, said Master Sgt. Jason Pitts, senior enlisted advisor, U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center.

To capitalize on the situation, the U.S. Army's Expeditionary Contracting Command maintains a partnership with ASC to participate in the active recruiting of future acquisition NCOs at Fort Bragg, N.C. The instal-

lation has almost 60,000 Soldiers and is a prime location for highly qualified candidates, according to Lt. Col. Dennis McGowan, director, Mission Contracting Office-Fort Bragg.

During a two-day symposium in March, Soldiers were briefed, given detailed information on the acquisition corps and what it means to be a member.

Pitts and Sgt. Maj. Leatrice Person, MCO-Fort Bragg sergeant major, led the effort to pull the Fort Bragg units together for the recruitment effort. The senior NCOs gained support from Fort Bragg's garrison, 82nd Airborne Division, and the XVIII Airborne Corps command sergeants major, all of whom pledged to support recruiting for the MOS and to support Soldiers who serve.

According to Person, ECC pursued multiple avenues to conduct

the recruitment. Once the senior leadership was on board, the ECC established contact with all the retention NCOs to get the word out. They distributed flyers and arranged for an article in the post newspaper. Person and Pitts said the event was a success.

While the rest of the Army is shrinking, as are retention benefits, the acquisition corps is growing and providing bonuses, excellent promotion opportunities, advanced civilian schooling, degree completion, and training with industry.

For more information about the acquisition corps or 51 charlie reclassification opportunities, visit the website at: <http://live.usaasc.info/career-development/military-nco/career-planning-steps> or call (703) 805-1048. ♦



Despite sustaining several injuries preparing for the marathon, Col. Jeff Gabbert, ACC chief of staff, finished the race with a time of 4:44:05. (Photo courtesy of the Boston Athletic Association)

Mental and physical pain not enough to stop the marathon man

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting
Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

One of more than 26,600 participants in this year's Boston Marathon, Col. Jeff Gabbert maintained one simple thought throughout the 26.2-mile trek through the historic Massachusetts city—finish the race.

No stranger to running marathons, the U.S. Army Contracting Command chief of staff ran his first marathon because of some in-house ribbing.

In 2008, while serving as the Defense Contract Management Agency Iraq/Afghanistan commander at Camp Victory, Iraq, word came down about the first Camp Victory marathon and his lack of participation.

"I told everyone I was going to run the half marathon," he said before discovering a petition was circulating throughout his command addressing his effort.

"It read, 'we the undersigned believe that if you only do half the marathon, then perhaps, you are only half a commander.' Needless to say it was game on from there," said Gabbert, whose longest run up to that time was 10 miles.

With only three weeks to train, he began his regimen and soon competed in his first marathon, finishing in three hours and 49 minutes.

Since then, he's run in the Rocket City Marathon in 2009, putting in his fastest time of 3:28, and in the 2010 Boston Marathon, finishing in 3:31.

"Running a marathon is not a race, but a long and hard journey of commitment," said Gabbert, whose competitiveness is both internal and external. "From the moment you make the decision to run a marathon there is no doubt you will face adversity and factors out of your control."

Gabbert said his marathon training regimen is 18 weeks long and includes running more than 750 miles as well as lifting plenty of weights. "Pumping your arms for three and a half hours straight is a tough task," he explained.

Gabbert said competing in a marathon takes one part perseverance, one part commitment and one part dedication.

"There is a pattern to what goes through my mind during a marathon. I start off with talking to myself about things like monitoring my pace and sometimes slowing myself

down,” said Gabbert. “Then, I try to think through the challenges currently confronting me in life. When I reach hills, I tend to think of the technique involved to continue with a steady effort, head and shoulders up. During the rough periods, I think of those that I have dedicated the run to and repeat the mantra—this is not about you. When it gets really tough, I think of my dad who taught me to slow down, but never quit.”

Because of the 84.8-degree temperatures at the start of the race, marathon officials extended a never-before option of allowing participants to sit out this year’s marathon and run next year instead. More than 5,000 runners accepted the offer. More than 2,000 runners didn’t make it to the finish line this year. Suffering from piriformis syndrome, a neuromuscular disorder that causes pain, tingling and numbness in the buttocks and descending down the lower thigh and into the leg, no one would have faulted Gabbert for pulling out of this year’s Boston Marathon.

So when the starting pistol for the 116th Boston Marathon exploded, wearing number 12156, Gabbert began this year’s 26.2-mile adventure.

Crossing the finish line at 3:06 p.m., his time of 4:44:05 was more than an hour off his desired time, but quite an accomplishment considering the pain and sweltering heat.

“I run them simply because I can. The day is quickly approaching when these knees will no longer take the long-distance road runs. Again, I started because of the challenge of my troops. Then, I caught the bug and began to chase entrance into Boston,” Gabbert said. “I have dedicated each marathon to someone close to me or a cause. Due to several injuries I sustained training for this marathon, I dedicated this run to all the wounded warriors who can no longer run.” ♦

Family group leaders receive presidential awards

By Rachel Clark
409th Contracting Support Brigade
Kaiserslautern, Germany

Kaiserslautern, Germany- Family Readiness Group leaders from the 903rd Contingency Contracting Battalion here were honored April 20 for their volunteer service.

FRG leaders Lori Taylor, Rania Corn, Ellen McMillan, and the 409th Contracting Support Brigade’s FRG leader Joanie Ralston received the President’s Volunteer Service Award for their volunteer work with the units’ family readiness groups. The women received silver-level awards for contributing between 250 and 499 hours towards volunteer services from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2011.

“As FRG leaders, Lori and Rania have been instrumental in supporting the vision of the FRG by organizing and planning activities, welcoming newcomers, acting as liaison to the commander and family members, and various other leadership functions of the FRG,” said Lt. Col. Lynda Royse, 903rd CCBN commander.

The purpose of the FRG is to encourage resiliency among the members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual support, and also provides activities that enhance the well being and esprit de corps within the unit. ♦



Jeffrey Crisp, deputy garrison commander, U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern and Command Sgt. Maj. Gene Canada present Rania Corn (left) and Lori Taylor (below), 903rd Contingency Contracting Battalion Family Readiness Group, the President's Volunteer Service Award.



A Mother's Day family reunion in Afghanistan

By Ann Jensis-Dale
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.



Master Sgt. Richard Jones (left) celebrating a Mother's Day reunion with his mother, Claire and father, Michael, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan

This year Claire Jones didn't receive flowers for Mother's Day. Instead, she received a bouquet of love at an unexpected family reunion.

Claire, a procurement contracting officer with the U.S. Army Contracting Command's Deployable Cadre Program, reunited with her husband Michael, and one of their sons, U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Richard Jones, while deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan.

"I kept telling myself this is the first Mother's Day I will not receive flowers," said Claire who has been in Bagram since November.

Claire's husband Michael, administrative contracting officer with the Defense Contract Management Agency, is also in Bagram but more than 30 minutes away. Although both are serving in Bagram, due to the travel restrictions, they have only seen each other twice. First when Claire arrived at Bagram Airfield and then again on Christmas Day.

"I was able to see Claire on Christmas Day since I was scheduled to brief lead administrative contracting officers about the contracts we have," said Michael.

Richard, who serves with the U.S. Air Force's 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron/33rd

Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit, arrived the day before Mother's Day and wasn't sure that he would be able to see his parents right away.

"I didn't call my mom until Mother's Day," said Richard. "I also told my Dad that I was trying to get things situated and that it probably wasn't a good day to get together."

"Richard told me there is a possibility he would be deploying to Afghanistan in May and I told him I'd extend my current deployment for the possibility of completing my dream of serving with him and my husband," said Claire. "Serving together with my husband and son, working together to make a difference, my dream did come true making a difference in support our country as a family," she continued.

Once Claire and Michael heard their son was arriving at the airfield, both separately began heading out to meet him.

"I called my husband to tell him Richard was coming in and I was heading to the airfield and he said he was doing the same," said Claire.

After a few tense moments, everyone arrived safely at the airfield for a long-awaited reunion.

"Man, I didn't think that we

would all be out here, but it's good to see them," said Richard. "God is good. I never thought I would see my parents here. One maybe, but both? That never happens. The possibility of seeing my Dad increased when he took a tour in Iraq with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to his DCMA tour. Then he tells me he is going on a second tour to Afghanistan. So from there I knew it was only a matter of time before I saw him in the sand box."

Military service runs deep in the Jones family. Claire has 29 years of federal service. Michael retired from the Army and has 18 years of federal civil service.

It was a dream for Claire to serve alongside her husband and son while deployed.

"My dream finally came true. I've always wanted to support our country as a family together," she said

"My parents' service is awesome. My dad is retired Army. I never really knew what he sacrificed until I joined the service myself," Richard. "My entire family supports each other and even my wife is prior service Air Force with a number of deployments under her belt. So with my family doing what we do, it's awesome." ♦

AROUND ACC



Brig. Gen. Theodore Harrison (right), commanding general, Expeditionary Contracting Command, passes the colors of the 409th Contracting Support Brigade to its new commander, Col. William Bailey, during a May 10 change of command ceremony at Panzer Parade Field, Kaiserslautern, Germany. (U.S. Army photo by Rachel Clark)



MICCSB - Mission and Installation Contracting Command small business specialists Annette Arkeketa-Rendon, left, and Deanna Ochoa assist with check-in during the command's small business event June 4 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. More than 200 small business representatives attended the event that included informational briefings and one-on-one meetings with MICC contracting officers and small business specialists to inform the small business sector of contracting opportunities to support Soldiers and their families. (U.S. Army photo by Daniel P. Elkins)



The Mission and Installation Contracting Command's Col. Shane Dietrich and Command Sergeant Major Rodney J. Rhoades participated in Pilgrimage to the Alamo April 23 as part of the Fiesta celebration in San Antonio, Texas. (U.S. Army photo)



Heidi Shyu (second from right), assistant secretary of the Army (acquisition, logistics and technology), meets with 901st Contingency Contracting Battalion Soldiers (left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Willie Signil, Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Johnson-Harper and Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Bennett during Shyu's visit to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Irwin, Calif., May 12. (U.S. Army photo)



(Left to right) Tie Steele and Doug Kirby, and two other Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground (Huachuca Division) employees, Donna Kimura-Long and Anna DeLozier participated in a triathlon for beginners at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., May 19. Participants were given 15 minutes to do each event: swimming, stationary biking and running. (U.S. Army photo)



Army Contracting Command - Rock Island, Ill., Executive Director Michael Hutchison briefs the Midwest Contracting Community at the 2012 Midwest Small Business Government Contracting Symposium, held May 22-24 at the iWireless Center in Moline, Ill. (U.S. Army photo)



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